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| **Date** | **Event** |
| August 10, 1945 | The United States and the Soviet Union agree to a temporary division of Korea—formerly a Japanese colony—along the 38th Parallel. U.S. forces were to occupy and administer the southern half, while Soviet troops would occupy and administer the North. |
| March 1946 | During World War II the two combatants in the Chinese Civil War—the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists under Mao Tse-tung—had agreed to a temporary truce while both fought the Japanese. However, less than a year after the defeat of Japan the truce fell apart, and large-scale fighting resumed between the two sides. |
| May 1948 | The United States sponsors elections in South Korea. The Soviets protest the decision, and instruct left-wing parties there to boycott the election. The result is that Syngman Rhee, a dedicated anti-communist who was educated in the United States, becomes head of the government. Soon afterward the Soviets establish a communist regime in North Korea under the leadership of Kim Il-sung. |
| August 12, 1948 | Eager to rid itself of commitments in East Asia, the United States formally recognizes the independence of South Korea, and arrangements begin for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region. The Soviets make a similar announcement regarding North Korea. |
| December 26, 1948 | The last Soviet troops leave North Korea. |
| January 1949 | Chinese communist forces under Mao Tse-tung enter city of Peiping. They change the name to Beijing and declare that it is the new capital of China |

**Korean War Timeline 1950-1953**

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| February 3, 1949 | U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, citing the unpopularity and corruption of Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists, recommends that the U.S. government stop sending aid. Truman and Congress reject this advice, and approve a further $60 million in economic and military assistance. |
| June 1949 | The last U.S. troops leave South Korea. |
| July 14, 1949 | The Soviet Union successfully tests its first atomic bomb; however, a formal announcement of this fact is not made until September 23. |
| October 1, 1949 | With most of the Chinese countryside, as well as its major cities, in communist hands, Mao Tse-tung declares victory in the civil war. He announces that henceforth the country will be referred to as the “People’s Republic of China.” |
| December 1, 1949 | Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters abandon the mainland and flee to the island of Taiwan, where they form a government called the “Republic of China.” |
| January 12, 1950 | Secretary of State Acheson gives famous “perimeter” speech to the National Press Club in Washington. Discussing U.S. strategy in Asia, he lists Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, and the Aleutian Islands as vital interests that will be defended with force. The list includes neither Taiwan nor South Korea. |
| February 9, 1950 | U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy (Rep.-Wisconsin) gives speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, blaming recent foreign policy failures—particularly Mao Tse-Tung’s victory in China—on the presence of communists in the State Department. |
| February 14, 1950 | After a two-month visit by Mao Tse-tung to Moscow, the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China announce a 30-year alliance treaty. According to the terms of this treaty, each side promised to come to the aid of the other in the event of a war against a third party. |
| March 10, 1950 | The Central Intelligence Agency warns of a massive buildup of North Korean troops along the South Korean border, predicts that an invasion is imminent. |

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| April 1950 | Soviet leader Josef Stalin gives Kim Il-sung permission to launch an invasion of South Korea; however, he warns Kim that "If you should get kicked in the teeth, I shall not lift a finger. You have to ask Mao [Tse-tung] for all the help." |
| June 25, 1950 | At approximately 4:00 am, 90,000 North Korean troops, equipped with Soviet weapons, invade South Korea. South Korean forces are quickly forced to retreat. Truman orders U.S. naval and air forces—but not ground forces—to assist in the defense of South Korea. |
| June 27, 1950 | The United Nations calls upon its members to come to the aid of South Korea. The proposal only wins the approval of the Security Council because the Soviet delegation is boycotting its proceedings to protest the U.N.’s failure to recognize Mao Tse-tung’s regime as the legitimate government of China. |
| June 28, 1950 | North Korean forces capture Seoul, the capital of South Korea. |